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Former FPC Official Criticizes U.S. Stand

U.S. commitments to aid Viet Nam never were originally formal actions of the U.S. government, former Federal Power Commissioner Howard Morgan told a gathering of 200 persons at Reed College Thursday night.

Morgan, taking part in Reed-sponsored review of the Southeast Asian war and the circumstances which led up to it, said powerful interest groups inside and outside government originally promised American support of the South Vietnamese government. He added that the American people were never aware the commitments were being made, during and since the period just after the 1954 Geneva treaty which ended the French-Viet Minh struggle.

Promises of American support came from interested individuals including the China lobby, religious leaders, private corporations, then-Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and his brother Allen, head of the Central Intelligence Agency, and, among others, Joseph P. Kennedy, Morgan said.

Morgan observed that the U.S. now is faced with having to support these commitments and, though it will not help the present situation to look back, it can help us in the "next one," he concluded.

Leader Plays Golf

Morgan said of the time, "We had a nice guy in the White House who played golf while others ran the shop." The others had axes to grind, he added.

Emphasizing that rational congressional deliberation of American commitments was needed, Morgan said, "I am convinced that (a formal

treaty) could never have been ratified by the Senate." The U.S. was committed by the interested individuals' personal agreements maneuvered through embassies of third-party nations, he said.

Also speaking before the gathering were Portland State College history professor Morris K. Webb and the Rev. A. Raymond Grant, Methodist Bishop of Portland.

After reviewing the history of Viet Nam since the mid-19th Century, Webb said the series of governments in Viet Nam had been created through U.S. military fiat and never through a vote of the Vietnamese people, although the Geneva treaty had originally called for free elections in both North and South Viet Nam.

U.S. Will Prevail

Webb, who predicted U.S. military might will eventually prevail over the Viet Cong guerrilla forces, said the U.S. involvement in South Viet Nam reflects its policy of containment of China. "To my mind . . . (containment) is one of the most bellicose policies known to man."

Bishop Grant said the Vietnamese war "leaves me confused, baffled and often disillusioned. We cannot be humbled by a conspiracy of silence or think that speaking out is disloyalty," he emphasized.

Asked what American students and others concerned about or opposed to American involvement in Viet Nam could do besides carry signs or write congressmen and newspaper editors, Morgan told the group, "I am very glad they've done what they've done and I hope they keep doing it."

He urged persons to keep writing to congressional representatives and said, "What we really want is a vigorous debate in Congress." Convinced the "large, intelligent group" questioning Viet Nam policy and they will debate, he said.